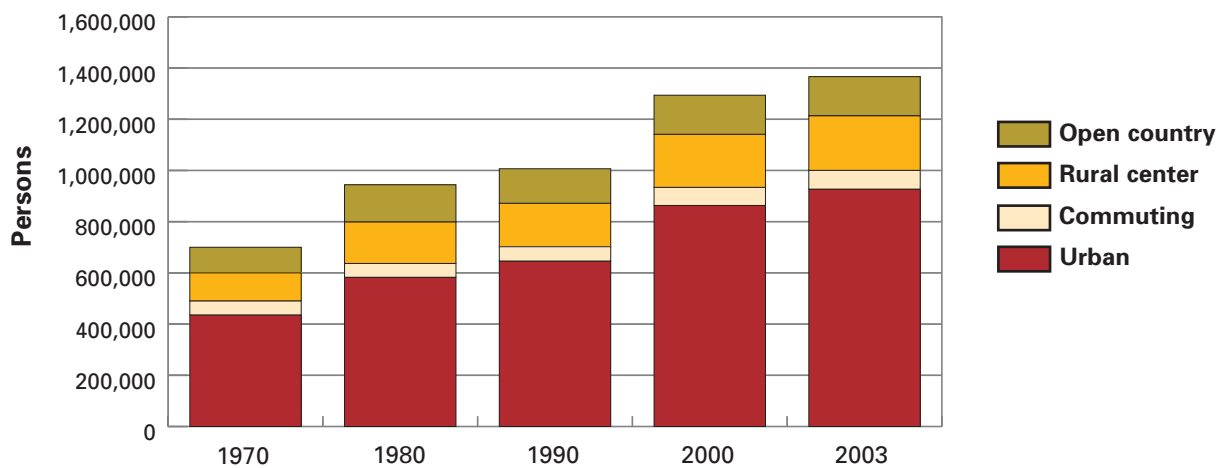


## DEMOGRAPHICS

Idaho's population has grown steadily, but often slowly, since 1920 with two notable exceptions. In the 1970s Idaho ranked seventh in growth among the states, and in the 1990s it ranked fifth. Rural Idaho's growth of 25 percent during the 1970s and 19 percent in the 1990s was nearly double the national rate. Only two rural counties lost population in each decade. Urban growth rates were even higher. Between 2000 and 2004 Idaho continued to experience above-average population change, ranking sixth nationally despite difficult economic conditions from late 2001 into 2003. Thirteen of Idaho's 35 rural counties declined in population between 2000 and 2003, and several others had very slow growth. The population pattern early in this decade is similar to the 1980s, when 18 rural counties experienced losses.

Idaho population growth

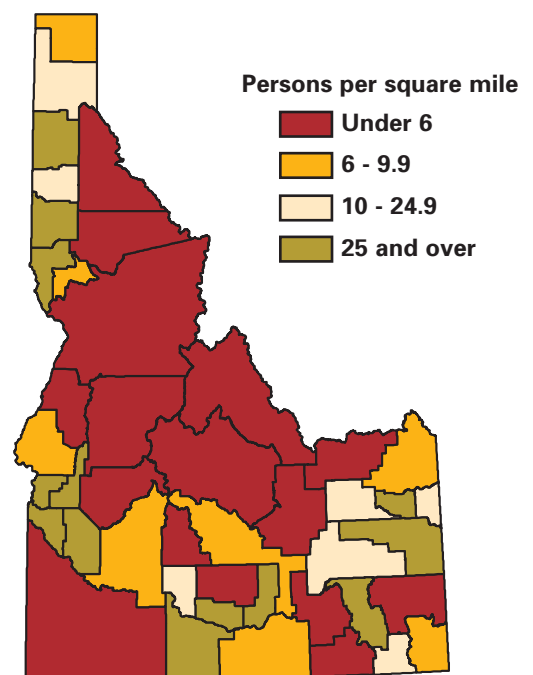


While almost 75 percent of population growth between 2000 and 2003 occurred in Idaho's three most populated counties, Ada, Canyon and Kootenai, rural amenity counties like Teton and Blaine continued to see rapid growth. Teton County ranked first in Idaho and 26th in the nation in percentage change in population.

Idaho's 35 rural counties, with almost 88 percent of the state's land area, are home to 32 percent of the population. Density is dramatically lower. Idaho averages 16 persons per square mile compared to 83 persons for the United States. Only six other states have a lower population density than Idaho. The state's urban counties average 91 persons per square mile while rural counties average 6. Sparsely populated counties of Butte, Camas, Clark, Custer, Idaho, Lemhi and Owyhee have fewer than two persons per square mile.

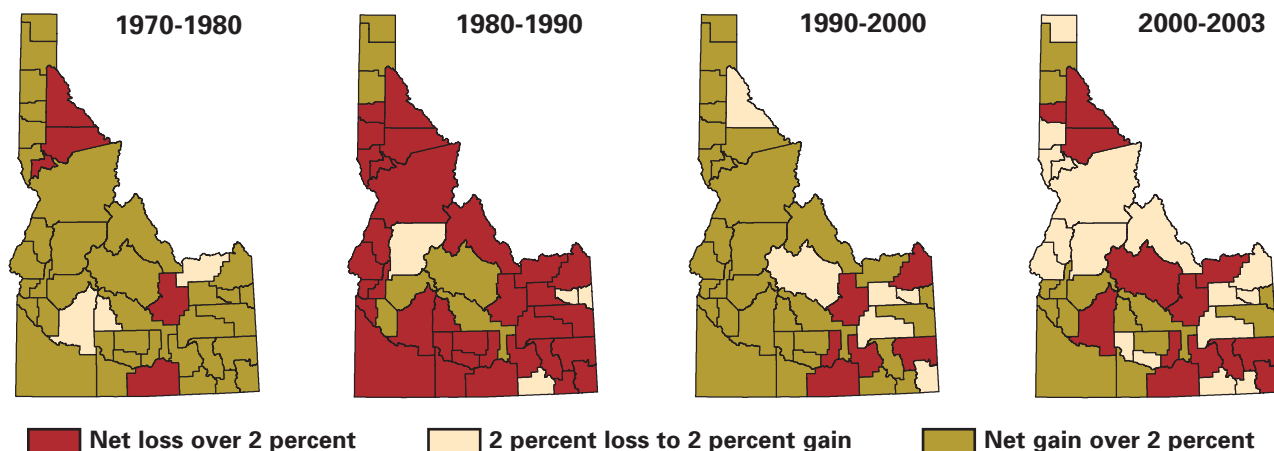
Newcomers to Idaho accounted for two-thirds of the 287,000 population growth in the 1990s. Almost 60 percent

Population density, 2003



## DEMOGRAPHICS

**Net migration trends**



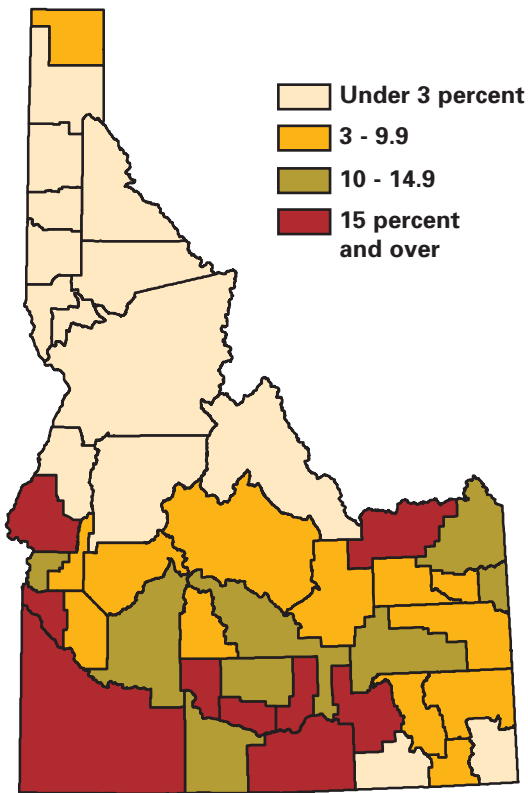
of the growth in rural areas involved new residents migrating from other locations. Urban migrants to rural areas can often add new economic vitality to their adopted community, but sometimes they cause difficult cultural changes for all. In the 1980s, tough economic times led to slow growth. Almost 42,000 more people moved out of Idaho than moved in. Over 95 percent of that out-migration came from rural Idaho. The economy has driven urbanization as rural Idaho gets a smaller share of newcomers in good times and loses more than its share in bad times.

Rural Idaho is becoming more ethnically diverse as Hispanics make up an increasingly larger share of the population. Hispanics accounted for 18 percent of the state's population growth from 1990 to 2003 but 31 percent of all rural growth and 48 percent of growth in rural centers. Hispanics now account for 11 percent of all rural Idahoans, compared to 9 percent statewide. As a share of the total, the Hispanic population is highest in the southern and eastern parts of the state, especially in Clark, Minidoka, Power and Owyhee counties. The minority share of Idaho's population went from 8 percent in 1990 to 12 percent 10 years later. In 2003, nine of the top 10 counties for percentage of minority population were rural. The number of counties with more than 10 percent minority population went from nine to 20 between 1990 and 2000. American Indians are the largest non-white racial group. In 2000, they made up 1.4 percent of the population. About 40 percent of Idaho's 17,700 American Indians live in rural counties. Idaho's Asian, Pacific Islander and Black populations grew rapidly during the decade and combined to make up 1.5 percent of the total population.

Nine of the 10 counties with the highest proportion of citizens age 65 or over in 2000 were rural. Rural counties had a median age of 36.5 years, almost five years more than urban counties. Counties in

Migration	Urban	Rural Total	Commuting	Rural Center	Open Country
1970-1980	98,600	30,600	6,200	16,800	7,600
1980-1990	-1,864	-40,057	-4,298	-14,169	-21,590
1990-2000	150,762	40,783	8,163	20,448	12,173
2000-2003	36,543	105	1,299	196	-1,390

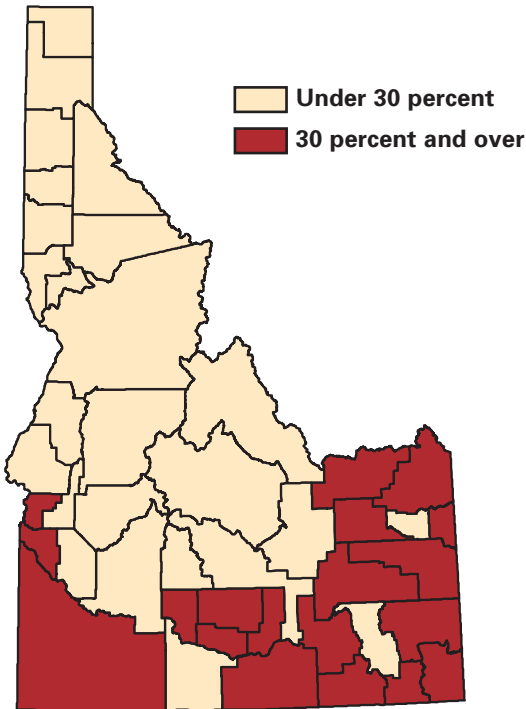
## Hispanic population, 2003



Idaho's open country had a median age of almost 40 years. In general, the number of elderly grew during the last decade, but the percentage of Idaho's 65-and-over population declined from 12 percent in 1990 to 11.3 percent in 2000. Since then many amenity counties have had a disproportionate number of seniors moving in. Within the next 10 years, aging baby boomers will accelerate that trend. More early retirees are now migrating to Idaho from major West Coast metropolitan areas for a greater quality of life.

A growing age group are the elderly 80 years and over. Access to health care and social services is especially important for these seniors. Rural communities are affected by a combination of the natural aging of the population and the “youth flight” phenomenon. As urban employment and income growth continue to outpace rural areas, limited opportunities force many young workers to move to urban areas for jobs and a better standard of living. As young people leave rural areas, there are fewer births, which compounds the problem. Some rural school districts may experience declines in student enrollments as a result.

### Counties with at least 30 percent of the population under 18 years of age, 2000



### Counties with at least 15 percent of the population 65 years of age and over, 2000

